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# 2012 Great American Smokeout (GASO)

Filed under COMMUNITY SUPPORT FAMILIES FORCE HEALTH AND SAFETY

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By Shanya Perkins, Public Health Educator, Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, Portsmouth Va.



Shanya Perkins (left), Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, Public Health Educator, gives information about smoking and how to quit smoking to a patient during the 2011 Great American Smokeout (GASO) campaign held at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth.

Last year, I participated in the Great American Smokeout (GASO). As a health educator from the [Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center \(NMCPHC\)](#), I had the opportunity to listen to some of the most amazing stories about how people quit, why people quit and what they were doing just to quit tobacco use for the day. Some people quit just to save money. Others quit because they had lost someone close or lost a part of themselves due to tobacco use. I was able to support one of the local military treatment facilities by dedicating myself for the day. Most Naval hospitals and medical clinics participate in the GASO at their respective bases.

This year on Thursday, November 15, 2012, we will be encouraging Sailors, Marines, families, retirees and civilians to give up tobacco products for at least a day. The majority of smokers and tobacco users want to quit and the GASO offers an opportunity to do so. One-way to quit is to go “cold turkey” which is a term used for someone who is quitting tobacco without any medication. Working with the Primary Care Team or seeking assistance from the local Health Promotion Program are additional proven approaches to quitting, and there are [free help lines and web based programs](#) that are effective as well.

There are several ways to participate. The [American Cancer Society](#) offers assistance making quit plans along with giving free tools for quitting tobacco use. In addition, the Department of Defense has the “Quit Tobacco Make Everyone Proud campaign” and the excellent website, [Ucanquit2](#) available for support. They offer a train to quit program with online coaches, an interactive quit plan, local support, games and handouts. Anyone can use this information to make individualized plans, find needed support or to seek a combination of both. Friends and family members may serve as a buddy and as a support person for those whose are quitting.

The NMCPHC offers resources for [Health Educators](#), [Health Care Providers](#) and those

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seeking information for their own [personal health](#). Additionally, there is a [community awareness page](#) that provides ideas on how you may be able to participate in the GASO. The information highlights what has been done in past years as well as information on upcoming events for 2012. Fact sheets, [posters](#) and flyers are available to increase awareness. There is also a [No Dips and/or Butts](#) booklet for those looking for ways to start a quit plan. The Wounded Ill and Injured (WII) population have access to a specialized [WII booklet](#) and a [web page](#) that draws attention to WII specific needs and why it is important to discontinue tobacco use even after an injury.

If you would like to participate there are guides to help quit smoking such as the one provided by the [American Cancer Society](#) and information for those who use [smokeless tobacco](#). Perhaps November 15, 2012 will be the first day of a smoke-free life for you or someone you know!

The GASO supports Navy Medicine's efforts to eliminate tobacco use throughout the Department of the Navy and is part of a larger tobacco cessation strategy directly linked to our Health Promotion and Wellness Campaign and the 21st Century Sailor and Marine Initiative.

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